

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 126343

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS UK AR

SUBJECT: UK SALE OF DESTROYERS TO ARGENTINA
REF: STATE 103787: STATE 103787

1. TOWARD CLOSE OF BILATERAL WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY
CHRISTOPHER MAY 16, UK MINISTER OF STATE FRANK JUDD RAISED
ISSUE OF SPERRY COMPASS EXPORTS LICENSE, AND LEFT AIDE
MEMOIRE PRESENTING BRITISH POSITION.

2. CHRISTOPHER RESPONDED THAT CASE WAS A DIFFICULT ONE,
PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF DETERIORATING HUMAN RIGHTS SITUA-
TION IN ARGENTINA AND OUR DESIRE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE
DECLARED INTENT OF CONGRESS EVIDENT FROM THEIR ABSOLUTE
PROHIBITION UPON SUCH SALES AFTER SEPT. 30 OF THIS YEAR.
HOWEVER, CHRISTOPHER ADDED, WE WOULD GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDER-
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ATION TO THE BRITISH REQUEST.

3. TEXT OF AIDE MEMOIRE FOLLOWS:

QUOTE ARGENTINA

QUOTE THE UK HAVE SOLD TWO TYPE 42 DESTROYERS TO ARGENTINA,

EACH OF WHICH HAVE TWO SPERRY MK 19 STABILIZED COMPASSES
FITTED, IN COMMON WITH ROYAL NAVY SHIPS. THE COMPASSES ARE
US ORIGIN, AND MANUFACTURED OUT OF SPERRY, CHARLOTTESVILLE.

QUOTE THE SPARES SUPPORT FOR THESE TWO SHIPS IS MANAGED BY
THE SHIPBUILDERS - VICKERS OF BARROW. ORDERS FOR TWO SETS
OF COMPASS SPARES WERE SUBCONTRACTED BY VICKERS TO SPERRY
GYROSCOPE UK, WHO IN TURN PUT THE WORK OUT TO THEIR SISTER
DIVISION AT CHARLOTTESVILLE. THE ORDERS WERE PLACED ON
13 DECEMBER 1976 (VALUE 100,000 DOLLARS) AND 10 MARCH 1977
(13,000 DOLLARS).

QUOTE AN EXPORT LICENCE WAS APPLIED FOR IN RESPECT OF THE
FIRST ORDER ON 4 NOVEMBER 1977, STATE DEPT NO REFERENCE
047998. AN APPLICATION FOR A LICENCE FOR THE SECOND ORDER
IS BEING SUBMITTED.

QUOTE THE LICENCE HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BECAUSE, WE
UNDERSTAND, OF THE DIFFERENT SITUATION INTRODUCED BY SEC 11
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1977
(PUBLIC LAW 95-92), A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED. THE PRO-
VISIONS OF THIS SECTION DO NOT COME INTO EFFECT, HOWEVER,
UNTIL 30 SEPTEMBER 1978.

QUOTE IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE IF ORDERS PLACED IN 1976
WERE REJECTED UNDER THIS SECTION. SUCH ACTION WOULD CAUSE
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CONSIDERABLE EMBARRASSMENT TO BOTH THE BRITISH SHIP-
BUILDERS INVOLVED AND TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT. THE
VALUE OF THE ORDERS IS SMALL AND INVOLVES SPARES OF A NON-
CONTROVERSIAL COMPONENT. UNQUOTE

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